



Blog

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Sex addiction is a mental illness because, like other addictions, it alters your brain chemistry. To start sexual addiction recovery, you must determine the root cause of your sex addiction, treat that issue, then work through the addiction and associated behaviors. Recovering from sexual addiction is challenging, but it's also possible.

What Defines a Mental Illness?



It can impact anyone regardless of age, income, social status, orientation, or other factors. It can take many forms and affects a person's emotional and physical well-being.

Some people have more than one mental illness happening simultaneously.

The good news is that mental illnesses can be treated, or the symptoms controlled, to help the person live a happy, productive life.

Is Sex Addiction a Mental Illness?

Sex addiction is a mental illness categorized as [hypersexuality disorder](#), which is compulsive behavior related to sexual experiences like sex, masturbation, or pornography viewing.

Some mental health practitioners question the sex addiction diagnosis because it's not in the American Psychiatric Association's "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders," which is the official diagnostic manual of the profession. But not having an officially listed diagnostic code doesn't mean a disorder isn't real.

"While there has been a lot of speculation and jokes about sex addiction being 'real,' we need to look at it from the lens of treating a mental disorder, trauma, or addiction. That's the only way for us to help those who are suffering," said Ed Tilton, Chief Operating Officer at Begin Again Institute.

Like any other addiction, sexual addiction requires education, treatment, and help to recover fully.

As Ed clarified, "Sex addiction carries all the clinical hallmark features of other addictions like those to substances, eating, and gambling."



The 4 Cs of addiction are:

1. **Compulsion.** Feeling like you must do something, as if you've lost your free will and can't control yourself.
2. **Loss of Control.** Engaging in behaviors more frequently and for longer than intended.
3. **Craving.** You still want to engage in a behavior, despite making promises not to, feeling shame or guilt, or other negative consequences of the action.
4. **Consequences.** Engaging in behaviors despite effects such as physical harm, relationship damage, or financial ruin.

The symptoms of sex addiction and its outcomes fulfill the four Cs.

Symptoms of hypersexuality disorder include:

Repeatedly engaging in sexual behavior without regard for physical or emotional harm to yourself or others.

Excessive preoccupation with and time consumed by, planning for, or engaging in sexual fantasies, urges, or behaviors.

Engaging in sexual fantasies, urges, or behaviors in response to your moods – such as anxiousness, boredom, frustration, or depression.

Excessively and repeatedly engaging in sexual fantasies, urges, or behaviors in response to life events or adverse feelings.

Unsuccessfully attempting to control or reduce your sexual fantasies, urges, or behaviors.



we offer multiple treatment options at Begin Again Institute, including our [14-day Men's Intensive](#) program. In a dedicated, specialized program aimed at addressing the root cause of sexual addiction, you'll be able to focus on your healing and start the road to your recovery.

Therapeutic options include:

Trauma-Focused Therapy. Start healing at the source of your addiction by discovering and addressing the trauma that resulted in your addiction.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. CBT helps you learn new coping techniques and more helpful decision-making practices.

Group Therapy. In a small group, you can see that you aren't alone and feel supported by others who understand your feelings.

[Contact Begin Again Institute](#) today if you're ready to recover from your sexual addiction.

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